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ABSTRACT

This series of single- and double-sheet articles is designed to help parents better understand the role of parents, the skills and constraints involved in parenting, the effects of parenting on child development, and the effects of child development on parenting. The series contains a set of articles which address general aspects of parenting, discipline, parent-teen communication, and the use of a "family council" to enrich communication. Another set of articles describes emotional aspects of parent-child relations: how to communicate love to children, how to promote a positive self-concept in children, and how children experience emotions. The third set describes the social, cognitive, and physical developmental levels parents can generally expect of children at each of the first five years of life in such activities as sleeping, eating, toilet training, temper tantrums, play, cooperation, etc. The last set of articles addresses the special concerns of child abuse and neglect, self-care for children, dual career families, day care, and single parent families. Each of the articles briefly discusses the issues involved in each topic and offers recommendations to help parents cope with the responsibilities of parenthood. (BN)

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[CHILD DEVELOPMENT, PARENTING AND FAMILY ISSUES: PUBLICATIONS OF THE MISSISSIPPI COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE.]

Norine R. Barnes

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DISCIPLINE: Love and Limits

What are your long term goals for your child's behavior? Most parents want their grown children to be independent, self-confident, capable of making wise decisions, and respectful of other people's rights and properties. Self-discipline is necessary to achieve these goals. A self-disciplined person has the inner controls necessary for dealing with frustrations and the demands of daily living. The goal of parental discipline is to develop self-discipline in the child.

Discipline is simply teaching good behavior. It's something you do **for** and **with** a child, not **to** a child. You help children learn to think for themselves. The approach or method you choose for this teaching may be critical to your child's emotional development and your enjoyment of parenting. Because of individual differences, there is no one right way to teach good behavior. All the guidelines that follow will help you build self-control in your child.

Define Good Behavior

Make sure the child understands what you expect. Decide ahead of time what the rules or limits will be. Keep the limits as few, as simple, and as consistent as possible.

Set Reasonable Limits

Set the limits so that success is possible and then gradually raise these expectations as the child's abilities mature. If it is difficult for you to judge whether or not a limit is reasonable, you may want to ask the Extension home economist in your county for guidelines.

Positive Suggestions

Give commands and suggestions in a positive way:

Instead of saying, *"Don't jump on the couch,"*

try *"If you want to be on the couch, you must sit on it."*

Some people think that putting discipline in a positive way is being permissive. Actually, positive discipline is based on the idea that children need and deserve guidance and direction from parents. If you give these guidelines in a positive way, your child will be more apt to cooperate with you.

Give Choices

Making choices gives the child valuable experience in decisionmaking; however, it is unfair to pose a command as a choice. If you say, *"Are you ready to come in for dinner now?"*, you give the child the option of saying no. It saves time and frustration to say, *"It is time for you to come in to dinner."*

Instead of *"Do you want to get dressed now?"*,

try: *"You need to get dressed now. You may wear the red or the blue shirt. Which do you want?"*

Redirect Behavior

If the child is behaving in an unacceptable manner, give a positive alternative. If the child is restless or overactive in the house, suggest outdoor play to run off some energy. As the child gets older, give him or her specific jobs to do.

Be sensitive to the emotional needs of your child. Poor behavior may mean the child is dealing with anger, hurt, or fear. Encourage your child to talk about these feelings. Then direct attention to an activity such as playing with dough, water, or painting, where the child can express feelings in an acceptable way.

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Respect the Child

Be as considerate and courteous to your child as you want him or her to be to you. Children must get respect from others before they learn to respect themselves. When correcting or guiding, remember to (1) address the behavior, not personality or abilities, (2) go directly to the child rather than yelling across the house or the yard, (3) sit on a chair or crouch down so you are talking face-to-face, and (4)admit it if you have made a mistake.

Change the Situation

It may help if you take delicate and tempting articles out of a child's reach. You do not need to completely, "child-proof" your house but a compromise between parent and child often avoids stressful situations. If possible, insure that the child has some space that is just his or hers, where there are relatively few restraints.

Promote Good Self-Concept

In all you do and say, help children feel good about themselves. People who feel badly about themselves often do not even try to act as they know they should. People with a good self-image usually want to act right and will try to learn what is expected of them.

Show your child love and respect even if you do not consider his or her behavior acceptable. Children have so much to learn that they often feel overwhelmed. Help the child but do not degrade the child's self-concept.

Role Model

As a parent, you are your child's role model for behavior. Be sure that you are a consistent and good role model. Otherwise, this quote may be true of you: *"My child acts like me no matter how often I tell him not to."*

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist.

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When Discipline Fails

In spite of all the positive discipline children receive, they still misbehave occasionally. Even among experts, there is a great deal of disagreement about how to deal with misbehavior. And parents know their children better than any expert.

When discipline fails, parents need to consider various options and then develop their own methods. This publication will deal with three of the possible options.

Natural Consequences

More than 100 years ago, Herbert Spencer coined the term "natural consequences" for the learning that apparently results when a child's own actions lead to a painful or distressing result. An example of natural consequences is when the child who does not come to dinner on time does not eat until the next meal. Parents should use common sense and see that children do not injure themselves.

Natural consequences cannot be used in all situations but work well where they can be. This method of learning has the advantage of not building resentment in children against their parents. It shows children clearly that their misbehavior is their problem and they will solve it or suffer the outcome.

Logical Consequences

When natural consequences cannot be used, consider logical consequences. Sound confusing? It isn't. It just means that the parent arranges the consequences that are logically connected to the misbehavior. It is important that you make this connection clear to the child.

Natural consequences are the natural outcome of the event, while logical consequences are an arranged result. This is an example of logical consequences: If a child leaves clothes and toys scattered about, you pick them up, put them in a box, and let the child simply do without the articles until he or she is ready to take care of them properly. Even though you arrange the result, the child sees it as an outcome of his or her own action and, therefore, changes the behavior. Both natural and logical consequences should be impersonal, involving no moral judgment, and you should apply them in a friendly manner.

Physical Punishment

Research shows that violence nearly always increases violence. Parents who punish their children in physically aggressive ways -- slapping, spanking, beating -- tend to increase the level of violent and aggressive behavior in their child. However, many conscientious and loving parents choose to use physical punishment. They choose it because their parents used it, and they don't know any other way to correct misbehavior. Others may strike a child because they are not willing to take the time and effort to apply natural and logical consequences.

However you choose to stop misbehavior, remember that the goal of parental discipline and punishment is to

rear a child to be an independent, self-confident adult who is capable of making wise decisions. Choose the consequences or punishments that promote this kind of growth.

Things To Consider

- Don't give in to blackmail. Have you ever noticed that most temper tantrums and other forms of acting out take place in public, for instance, in a store, a church, or at a friend's house? The setting is guaranteed to embarrass the parent and usually assures the child's desired results, whether it is getting attention, buying a toy, or leaving. If you will ignore the child completely (it is difficult but possible), he or she will see that tantrums don't work.
- Don't threaten. "He never listens to me" is an often-heard complaint. Could the reason be that the parent threatens and does not deliver? Once you tell a child the consequences of a specific behavior, you need not tell him again. Don't you tend to tune people out when they repeat themselves?
- Act maturely. The object of punishment is to stop unacceptable behavior, not to vent frustrations or engage in a power struggle. Parents cannot always keep from feeling anger and frustrations, but they can learn to handle these emotions in a mature way.
- Punish immediately. To effectively connect the misdeed with the punishment, the parent needs to act immediately.
- Do not use emotional abuse. The parents should never threaten to leave the child or withdraw their love. Parental care and love are essential to the emotional development of the child and should not ever be in question.

By **Norine R. Barnes**, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist.

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Special Concerns of the Dual Career Family

American families have moved into a new era, one for which they have few role models. The reality of dual career families in a fairly nonsupportive social environment is upon us. The majority of adults were raised in families where only the father worked outside the home. From this model of single provider, today's dual career couple learned what to expect of family life, division of household tasks, professional dilemmas, and child rearing. Is it any wonder that confusion and conflict exist? Let's look at each of these concerns and briefly analyze their components.

Division of Household Tasks

Role overload is the label used to identify competing demands for time and energy. Working mothers, for whom role overload is almost constant, often refer to their lives as a juggling act. With excessive demands on her time, she feels she is stealing time either from the job or from home and children. Some women also recognize that the frustration of the constant lack of personal time takes a toll on their emotional well being.

The reality of role overload seems to have a greater effect on the mother than the father, in most dual career households. The majority of recent research concludes that the mother still has the bulk of responsibility for housework and child care. Some fathers share the work at home, most frequently child care, but for most families the pattern seems to follow stereotypical definitions of role performance.

The stress resulting from role overload must be managed. Here are some suggestions that might help:

- In family council, put the chores in order. List most important and forget the least important.
- Delegate responsibility for necessary tasks among family members. Make a schedule for completion of tasks.
- Lower your meal preparation, cleaning, and yard work standards.
- Use labor- and time-saving techniques.
- If possible, hire outside help.
- Admit that you are not superhuman.

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Care of Children

Concerns over adequate child care may be even more difficult to resolve than stress produced from role overload. The main emotional reaction to child care decisions is guilt. After all, don't children really need their mother at home? Who cares for the sick child? Who takes the child to ball practice or dancing lessons? Even more guilt producing is the realization that when mom's at work, the kids may have to come home to an empty house. Working mothers often report feeling a wave of panic while at work as the time for the kids to come home alone from school approaches each day.

Many dual career parents are keenly aware that the time spent with the child is limited, but managing the home and job as well as finding relaxed interactive parent-child time can also produce stress and frustration. How enjoyable and relaxed can a session of tinker toys with the four-year-old be if Mom or Dad is thinking that the refrigerator is empty and no one has clean clothes for tomorrow.

Sharing child care and transportation responsibility is a large part of the answer. As strange as it sounds, the mother is often reluctant to give up her role as the primary care giver. Women have traditionally recieved much recognition and adoration for being a "good mother." Perhaps it is threatening to share this ego gratification with the others.

For most dual career families it is necessary to select a paid caregiver for eight to twelve hours a day. This should be done with careful deliberation. Please refer to MCES Infomation Sheet 1271, "Day Care for Children."

A great deal of research has been done on the effects of working mothers on a child's development. The majority of such studies conclude the personality traits and behavior

patterns of children with working mothers differ very little, if at all, from children whose mothers do not work outside the home. Research has repeatedly found that children do not suffer from good surrogate care.

The child does need quality time with the parents -- time when the child is the sole focus of attention. The length of time is not nearly as important as is the consistency and closeness of the sharing.

Professional Dilemmas

Dual career couples often must decide whose career takes perference--especially when a move is necessary to advancement. Traditionally, it has been the wife who has suppressed career goals and made sacrifices. A common result has been loss of personal work satisfaction and feelings of resentment.

There is a need for consideration of family values and marriage expectations as well as possible alternatives in dealing with such crises.

One alternative is to relocate wherever the spouse with fewer job and/or location opportunities has the best chance of finding work. If it is more difficult for one partner to get work in his or her chosen field, the couple relocates to an area where that partner is most likely to be hired.

Another option is a commuter marriage, with each spouse living and working in the geographic area that offers the best opportunities. The difficulties in maintaining a long distance relationship make this a risky choice, but it may be a viable alternative if used for a short time.

A third choice is not to accept a job transfer and stay where you are. With two salaries being earned, your family may not miss the loss of added income from a promotion. This is really a choice of values.

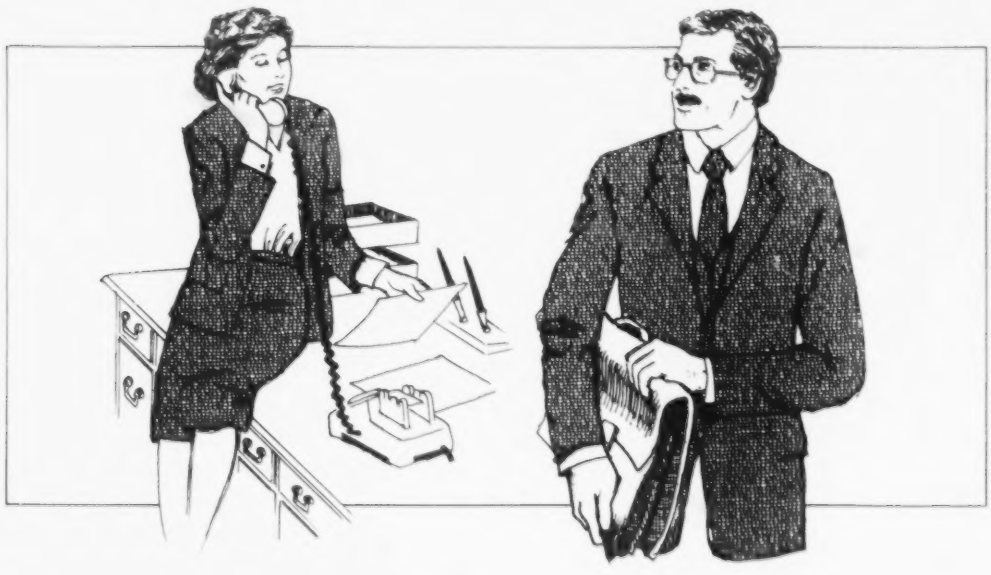
Dynamics of Family Life

Family dynamics, the interaction between family members, is as important in the dual career family as in any other. How the family functions as a unit depends on a complex interaction between such elements as personalities, values, communication, life cycle stage, self esteem, and flexibility.

To complicate things further, the dual career couple must recognize the effect of earning power on distribution of power. The larger the wife's financial contribution, the greater her power in family decision-making. As marriages become more equal in responsibilities, conflict appears less likely to occur.

The employment of women cannot be said to be good nor bad for a marriage, but it is true that dual employment is not easy. Husbands and wives must share its burdens as well as its rewards.

Through communicating with each other, setting priorities, and re-evaluating old habits and assumptions, dual career families can establish and maintain a healthy family life.



By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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DAY-CARE FOR CHILDREN

Most parents, whether employed outside the home or not, need help with child care. Parents should not feel guilty about leaving their child in the care of others, but they should recognize that they are still responsible for their child's needs and healthy development. If you are looking for someone to help care for your child, be very careful to select the best care available.

Kinds of Care Available

There are several child-care options available today. One type is not necessarily better than another, but you must make definite choices based on your child's needs.

- **Sitters** are the most popular child-care arrangement. Parents have relatives or non-relatives care for children either in the child's home or in the sitter's home.
- **Day-care in the care giver's home** is popular for infants, toddlers, and children who need care when they are not in school. Services and schedules vary.
- **Day-care centers** serve children of various ages. The hours of operation and holiday schedules vary but usually care is available in day-care centers for longer hours than in most other arrangements. Day-care centers usually serve many children, so if you are considering a day-care center, find out the number and ages of the children who will be in your child's group.
- **Nursery schools** usually enroll children ages 2-5 and provide a developmental or educational program for part of the day. They may close for holidays and summer vacation.
- **Kindergartens** usually provide an educational program, are either public or private, and enroll children 4-6 years old for all or part of a day, five days a week. They usually follow the holiday schedule of the public schools.
- **Head Start** offers educational programs for children and supplemental services to families. They accept children of various ages and operate on individual schedules. Enrollment is usually limited to families with low income or to children with special health or handicapping conditions.

Select Quality Care

Call the centers you are investigating to get basic information. You will want to know their location, the hours they are open, the ages of children they accept, and other details that are important to you. Try to find care that is available when and where you need it. Be sure that the fee fits your budget and check on sliding fees (fees based on your income) and income tax rules. For information call your local Internal Revenue Service.

Visit the homes and centers that seem to meet your needs. Many have waiting lists so be sure to allow plenty of time. Look carefully because you are making an important decision.

There are several things you should consider. Are the indoor and outdoor play areas safe? Are there enough space and enough equipment for the children to play freely? Are the children getting nutritious food as well as plenty of rest and exercise?

Are things going smoothly? Are the children content? Is the noise level too quiet or too noisy? Everybody has good and bad days so you might need to make a second visit. Take your child along to see if you both agree that this is a good place for your child to be while you are away.

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Be Involved

The selection of good child care is the first and most important step, but you still need to be actively involved.

- Make sure you have taken care of immunizations and have completed all necessary forms. Provide the things your child may need such as diapers or extra clothing.
- When you take your child to a new care giver, plan to stay for a while to make the adjustment easier.
- Be there on time at the end of the day so that your child will not become fearful of being left there alone.
- Talk with your child about some of the things that happen while you are apart. This gives confidence that you really do care and are thinking about him during the day.
- Some of the best situations are those in which parents and care givers help each other. Try to practice the same learning skills and discipline techniques at home that your child learns during the day.
- Be willing to help. Many care givers appreciate receiving scrap paper discarded at work because the children can use it for drawing. Your child will take great pride in using materials you have provided. Suggest activities, lend books, and drop by for a visit when you can.
- Make a special effort to talk with the person caring for your child. Express your appreciation and compliment the care giver on the progress your child is making. Tell them that knowing your child is receiving excellent care relieves you of worries so you can be a better parent and do a better job at work.
- Tell the care giver about experiences in your child's life and ask how things are going at school. Do this regularly. Do not wait for a problem to develop. Do not assume that everything is fine -- ask!

Spend Time Together

Children need love, guidance, and support from their parents. This doesn't mean that they need all of the parents' time. Parents have rights, too, and need some time for themselves.

Your child will be happiest when you are happy as an individual, happy with yourself, and the way you combine the many roles in your life. If you are feeling guilty and pressured, you are likely to reflect these feelings in your relationship with your child. Some parents try to compensate for being away by spoiling the child. Others may resort to high expectations and very strict discipline. Your child deserves a well-adjusted parent. Give yourself some time to be alone and to relax. You will be doing your child a favor. Having the tidiest house, cleanest wash, or neatest backyard is not as important as how you feel about yourself and your child.

The time you do spend with your child needs to be quality time, time when you both share feelings and talk about what is really on your minds, time when you feel close and loving.

Allowing your child to watch television while you work on the monthly bills is not quality time together unless you are sharing what you are doing. Turning the television off and showing your child what you are doing and how it works, even asking your child to help lick stamps or envelopes, can provide an opportunity for quality sharing. On the other hand, you might leave the television on and share the show with your child by sitting close together and enjoying each other's reaction.

If you do a thorough job of investigating the sitter or day-care center before you decide to entrust your child to them, and if you remain involved in what goes on during the time your child is away from you, then you should both have good experiences with the arrangement. The time you have together can then be meaningful and rewarding.

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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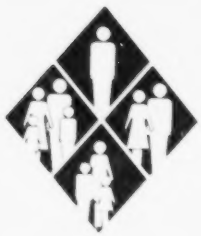

Enriching Families with a Family Council

Why Have a Family Council?

A family council is a regularly scheduled meeting of family members who live together, whether or not they are related by blood or marriage. It is a way for family members to discuss anything of common concern and importance to each family member and to the family as a group. It is a way of showing to family members that the family group is an important priority in their lives. It allows family members to enjoy one another and provides a way to achieve mutual equality and respect among all family members. A family council can help family members feel involved in the family. Most important, it creates the feeling that each person's opinion is valuable and necessary in order for the family to function efficiently.

Some families are able to hold a successful family council informally (for example, during mealtimes, or when playing or working together). Other families need more structure to them in order to obtain results.

Some Cautions before Holding a Family Council

Family councils are not for everyone. Neither are they a magical cure-all for family problems. Family councils are a tool, and like any tool they must be used correctly and with caution lest they inflict more harm than good. Families whose members have a long history of deeply rooted psychological problems may not find family councils very helpful.

Some issues shouldn't be dealt with in family councils. Only those issues affecting the entire family have a place in the family council. Problems between husbands and wives, parents and children, or between siblings may not be appropriate for all family members to discuss.

Family councils are largely a preventative measure in dealing with conflicts. They shouldn't be used just to solve problems. If they are used correctly they will prevent many potential problems.

What Are Some Issues for Family Councils ?

Any issue should be acceptable for family council unless it is decided that the specific subject doesn't affect the whole family. The family council shouldn't be used for family members to settle personal quarrels. Here are some possible issues for family council:

Sharing Positives

The family council provides an opportunity for family members to share positive things they feel about each other. It's an opportunity for family members to understand, encourage, and support each other in positive ways.

Information Sharing

Family council meetings are a time when members can discuss coming events, plans for fun or work, changes in living arrangements, progress toward goals, and achievements by individual family members.

Problem-Solving

The family council provides a chance to discuss and review individual and family problems in a less crisis-oriented setting. It allows for freedom of discussing problems in a sensible and thought-provoking manner, at the same time allowing family members to be creative thinkers in problem-solving. Family members have an opportunity to become more aware of how others feel about the issue being discussed. Problems are solved through discussion that enables each member to listen, talk, think, and finally to reach agreement with the other members. Problems are not solved by arguing, nagging, or condemning one another.

Planning and Decision-Making

The old cliche, "a person learns best by experience," applies to the family council. The parent who allows a child to participate in decision-making soon learns the child will cooperate more readily. Discussion can be time-consuming, but the decisions reached will be more acceptable to all family members.

Family Involvement

In every family there are certain tasks to be performed for the family to function smoothly. Through a family council, family members can discuss what tasks need to be done, who will do them, how to share responsibilities, make decisions, and cooperate in carrying out the tasks.

Concerns Over Family Rules and Regulations

Family life can produce anxiety, tension, and disagreement. At a family council the family members can discuss what is dissatisfying within the family or what rules and regulations they disagree with. They can also participate in discussions concerning punishments if rules and regulations are violated. Thus, they not only share responsibility for making decisions but for enforcing them as well. This can eliminate bickering, complaining, and backbiting in the family.

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A Social Learning Experience

Through the interactions of family members, a child develops opinions of self and social relationships. The family council is a good means for developing independent persons who care and are concerned about others. The family council provides the child with a learning environment for developing social interest, cooperation, and the capacity to give and take in an orderly way.

Roadblocks to Effective Family Councils

- a dominating parent
- a meeting that doesn't begin or end on time
- decisions that aren't followed through
- cancelling sessions
- a meeting that's used only as a gripe session
- skipping meetings

Tips for Successful Family Councils

- Set a regularly scheduled time for meeting. Meet each week if possible. A family council that meets only when a crisis develops will never be successful. If meetings are changed or cancelled all family members should agree.
- Share responsibility for conducting the family council. Younger children may need help at first.
- Attendance should be voluntary, not mandatory. However, if it's successful, family members will want to participate. Those not attending the meeting should know that family decisions will be discussed regardless of whether or not they're present. Therefore it is in their best interest to attend. This shouldn't be used as a threat, but as a natural and logical sequence.
- Everyone who lives in the household should be included and on an equal basis.
- The family council should be considered an open forum with complete freedom of expression. Any family member is allowed to express an opinion. Undoubtedly there will be differences of opinion. However, interrupting, correcting, or criticizing should not be permitted. The family council is not a time to preach, scold, or dominate the meeting. It is a meeting where family members should be able to express their opinions openly. Other family members then have the responsibility of responding in an understanding rather than judgmental way.
- The general rule of thumb for making decisions in the family council is consensus. Issues should be discussed until a consensus agreeable to all is reached. If unanimity is not possible, the issue should be tabled until the following meeting. Votes shouldn't be taken, as doing so may divide the family.
- Family members should take turns keeping minutes of family council meetings. This will help in future sessions as old problems are brought up again. They will also be useful as a reference when decisions are made, especially concerning family roles and responsibilities.

The family council has tremendous potential for enhancing family relations. It's not a cure-all but it does provide a positive experience for family members when it's successful. It requires time, effort, involvement, and a personal commitment by all members of the family. If nothing else, it establishes the family as a priority in the mind of its members.

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You & Your 1-YEAR-OLD

1-1. Ages & Stages

Sleeping

Your one-year-old needs a regular bedtime schedule and **should sleep in his own bed**. Keep this time special. Try to avoid scolding near bedtime, and never put the child to bed as punishment.

Young children to to sleep more easily if the hour before bedtime is quiet and peaceful. Avoid rough play and loud activities at this time of day.

One-year-olds usually sleep 12 hours a night and are early risers. Naptime should be flexible since your child may need more rest one day and less the next.

When he awakens in the morning or after a nap, the one-year-old usually wants attention, needs changing, and he may be hungry.

Bathing

Your little one likes his bath, but be careful not to get soap in his eyes.

Give him safe tub toys to play with while you bathe him, and **never leave him alone in the tub**.

Dressing

The one-year-old begins to try to dress himself. Encourage him by selecting clothes that are easy to put on and take off. Except for special occasions, his clothes should be simple, sturdy, and require little care.

Eating

A child grows more slowly in his second year and may need less food. His appetite varies, especially if he is teething. Don't force him to eat more than he wants, and do not make a game out of a meal.

Serve small portions of food and even smaller portions of new ones. Your year-old youngster may refuse to eat unless he can feed himself. However, he may tire of feeding himself and need help toward the end of a meal. Let him use his fingers when he wants to, but give him a spoon to hold.

He still may want a bottle, especially at bedtime, but encourage him to drink from a small cup.

Small, wholesome midmorning and midafternoon snacks are a good idea. Provide a balanced diet of nourishing food.

Toilet Training

It is best not to start bowel training before the child is 18 to 24 months old. Bladder training usually comes later.

The one-year-old may take an interest in his bowel movement and want to play with it. Let him know you do not want him to do this, but don't scold him for his interest.

Avoid waterproof pants if the child has diaper rash.

Medical Supervision

Take your child to his doctor for regular physical checkups. Have a doctor you can reach easily in case of emergency.

Crawling, Climbing, and Walking

One-year-olds want to crawl and climb, and they like to practice walking while you hold hands. Most children learn to walk between 12 and 15 months, but they still may crawl part of the time.

The one-year-old needs exercise and opportunities to explore. Don't confine him to playpen or chair for long periods of time.

Remove from the child's reach all potentially dangerous items and precious breakables. Cover electrical outlets, and put gates across doorways and stairways. Keep him away from open windows. Watch the child at all times when he is exploring or playing, and **never leave him unattended in or near water.**

PS 016625

Talking

A child usually speaks two or three words by his first birthday. By his second birthday he may speak short sentences and know from 200 to 300 words.

Talking to and reading to a child help him learn to speak. Use short sentences and avoid baby talk.

Play and People

Toys should be safe and sturdy or easily replaced.

The one-year-old likes boxes that fit inside each other, large pegs that fit into holes, pots and pans, and wooden spoons. He also likes old handbags he can carry things in, and he enjoys games such as peek-a-boo, hiding, and being chased.

The child loves to be outdoors, but he should **never be left unobserved.** He likes to be near other children but generally is not ready to play with them. Don't shame him if he is shy with strangers, and do not force him to be friendly.

Young children need to relate to males as well as females. If there is a missing parent arrange for your child to play often with a trusted relative or family friend to help fill that void.

Sexual Development

Sexual curiosity among young children is normal and desirable. Children at this age often explore and play with their genitals. Never punish or shame young children for their sex related interests and behaviors.

Thumb-sucking

The one-year-old still may suck his thumb. Ignore the behavior. He will outgrow it when he is ready. If the child sucks his thumb a great deal, provide him with plenty of exercise and other things more interesting than his thumb. Extra loving attention is helpful.

Independence and Discipline

The one-year-old is starting to show his independence but he doesn't know desirable from undesirable behavior.

Remember your goals no matter how he behaves. You want your child to be active, independent, curious, self-respecting, and able to love and enjoy others.

Avoid punishment. With a one-year-old this often means nothing more than getting him interested in another activity so he won't continue to do whatever it is you don't want him to do.

Provide as much freedom as possible and a minimum of restrictions. Let your child know what you expect of him. Be consistent and show your pleasure when he behaves in an acceptable manner.

Remember your child loves you and wants to please you. It is love and not punishment that keeps him trying to do well as he grows.

By Mrs. Norine Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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You & Your 2-YEAR-OLD

1-2, Ages & Stages

Awareness and Security

The two-year-old is aware of the world around him. He demands attention and wants to be included in all activities.

He wants to be sociable, but he may feel frightened by change. He is shy of strangers. He is upset if someone in the family goes away, or if the family moves to a new home or even if he is put to bed in a different room.

As his world broadens and he encounters new experiences, it is important to give your two-year-old extra love and attention so he feels secure.

Independence and Discipline

The two-year-old tries to be independent. He likes to do things **his way**, and he is apt to be contrary. He also is an explorer. He needs as much freedom as he can handle safely. He is likely to get into things and to wander off. It is time to teach him rules about what he may and may not do.

Be consistent in your discipline, and try to avoid punishment. Encourage him when he behaves as you want. Remember, it is love and encouragement not punishment, that help him to do what is expected. No matter how he misbehaves, **never tell your child you don't love him.** You and he both know that he can't be good all the time, but your love is something he must always be able to depend on.

Play

A two-year-old needs play that exercises his muscles, works off his energy, and stimulates his mind and imagination. He needs toys to punch, pull, and carry. He needs things that come apart and fit together. He needs the chance to walk, run, climb, swing, dig, and throw. Be sure that all play things are safe and keep them in sight during his play time.

He has not learned to share. He grabs another child's toy and he gets into quarrels and fights. Play among children of this age should be supervised but don't intrude unless necessary.

Two-year-olds should be exposed to music. They need books to look at, and they enjoy being read to for short periods. Limit television time. Avoid programs that include violence or that seem to over excite or upset the child.

The two-year-old wants to help with chores, and, when possible, he should have this opportunity. Tell him when he is helpful.

The child at this age quickly becomes restless when he is confined. Avoid taking him on long outings where his activities will be restrained. The two-year-old often enjoys rough and tumble play with adults. This should not take place just before bedtime.

Speaking

Encourage the two-year-old to talk. Listen and respond to him. Use simple language, and avoid baby talk. Tell him the name of things that he sees around him. Look at picture books with him, and teach him names of objects in the pictures.

Thumb-sucking

Thumb-sucking is common among two-year-olds. Try not to worry about it. If the child sucks his thumb a great deal, give him plenty of affection and many interesting things to do.

Temper Tantrums

The young child may blow off steam by yelling, screaming, beating on the floor or walls with his feet, hands, and head when his problems are too much for him to handle. Let him get it out of his system for a few mintues – distract him by doing something he enjoys.

Bathing and Toileting

The two-year-old loves to help wash himself and to play in the bathtub. **Never leave him unattended when he is in the tub.**

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Your child should begin to use the toilet by himself, but he may be inconsistent. It's best not to show concern. He will learn control as soon as he can.

Medical and Dental Care

Take the child to the doctor for regular physical check-ups.

The two-year-old should begin to learn to brush his own teeth, but he still needs supervision. Before his third birthday the child should have his first dental checkup.

Sleep and Rest

The two-year-old still needs 10 to 12 hours of sleep at night and some rest during the day. Soon after he is in bed he may ask for a drink of water or want to use the bathroom. Often this is another expression of his need for security. Establish a brief ritual that includes a quiet, soothing reassurance of your love. Sit in a chair close to the bed. If you lie down on his bed you may start a habit that is hard to break. After this special attention let him know you expect him to go to sleep by himself.

Dressing and Clothing

Encourage the two-year-old to dress and undress himself. His clothes should be simple, sturdy, and require little care. Let him choose from several shirts or pants.

Eating

The two-year-old should feed himself. Don't try to hurry him and don't worry if he gets messy. Provide a well balanced diet, but go easy with new foods. Don't force him to eat food he dislikes or to eat more than he wants.

Whenever possible, the child should eat with the rest of the family.

Babysitters

Leave your child with someone you know and trust. Except in emergencies, never leave a two-year-old with someone who is a stranger to him.

Always tell the sitter how you can be reached, the time you plan to return, and the telephone numbers of the doctor, police, and fire department.

Nursery School

If a two-year-old is to attend nursery school, the school should have small classes, suitable facilities for his age group, and teachers especially trained in caring for young children.

The New Baby in the Family

When a new baby is expected, begin talking about this to your two-year-old a few weeks in advance (this is important since the idea doesn't need to be introduced too early). Show him where the baby will sleep and the clothes the baby will wear.

When the new baby arrives, the two-year-old is apt to show both jealousy and love. This behavior is normal and predictable. Give him many physical and verbal reasurrances of your love. Never shame a child when he shows jealousy, but never leave a baby alone with a child of this age.

By Mrs. Norine Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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You & Your 3-YEAR-OLD

1-2, Ages & Stages

Sociability and Cooperation

The three-year-old begins to understand the rights of others and how to cooperate, to take turns, and to share. He begins to play with others and have special friends. He likes older children but may pester them. He likes his parents' company, too. If there is a missing parent in the home, arrange for the child to be with other adult relatives or family friends occasionally to help fill that void.

Your three-year-old should be expected to do small chores at home. Always recognize his help, and do not criticize if his work is not perfect.

Imagination and Fears

The child may have imaginary playmates or pets or pretend he's an animal. Don't make fun of his imagination. Teach him what pretend means, and let him know it's all right to use his imagination.

Your three-year-old may develop fears he didn't have when he was younger---fear of the dark, animals, loud noises, or new people. Family quarrels, accidents, or things he views on television may frighten him. Don't make fun of his fears...instead let him know that you understand his feelings.

Do not threaten or scare a child to make him obey.

Play and Learning

The play of a three-year-old child still needs adult supervision. Quarrels are frequent. Certainly don't try to place blame, but instead involve him with a different activity.

Most three-year-olds enjoy painting, crayon work, and modeling clay. Encourage his efforts. He likes music, rhythm play, guessing games, and simple puzzles. He has favorite books, and he likes his favorite stories read many times. He should be helped to recognize letters and numbers and to learn short rhymes and songs. He loves to talk and be talked to...take time to listen.

Discipline

Three-year-olds begin to learn right from wrong. Take time to teach him reasons why some behaviors are more acceptable than others.

Remember discipline is to help your child grow into a happy, lovable, creative, stable, responsible, and self-respecting person. Be consistent in your expectations, and set a good example for your child. Be generous with praise, and when possible avoid punishment.

Nursery School

Many three-year-olds are ready for nursery school. Before selecting a nursery school for your child, visit the school while it is in session. Interview the teacher. Inspect the facilities and equipment. Discuss any special problems of your child. If your child is overly shy, the teacher may want you to stay at school with him the first day or two.

Thumb-sucking

Many children at three years still suck their tumbs. This is best ignored. If the child sucks his thumb a great deal, give him plenty of love and companionship and a variety of interesting things to do.

Temper Tantrums

When his problems are too much for him, a three-year-old may yell, scream, kick, or bang his head, feet and hands. Ignore him if possible. If the behavior does not achieve his goals it will cease.

PS 0163

Sexual Development

The three-year-old usually begins to ask sex-related questions. Give simple, honest, matter-of-fact answers.

Three-year-olds often play with their genitals. They may engage in sex play with other children. Don't show anger, shock, or disgust. Do get them involved in other activity. If the child's sexual activities seem excessive, consult a physician.

Bathing and Toileting

Three-year-olds should learn to wash themselves. **Never leave them alone in the tub.** To avoid burns, put red tape on the hot water faucet, and teach them what the tape means.

Your three-year-old should go to the bathroom alone. Don't give him more help than needed. Most three-year-olds have learned bowel control but some still wet themselves. Don't scold or shame the child. He will learn control as soon as possible.

Dressing

Except for special occasions, a three-year-old child should dress himself. Keep his everyday clothes simple and sturdy. Allow him to select from two or more garments that you consider appropriate.

Sleep and Rest

Three-year-olds still need 10 or 12 hours of sleep at night, and most need a nap after lunch. Even if they don't sleep during the day, they should be quiet for an hour or so. Provide them with books or quiet toys to help keep them occupied and settled. The three-year-old enjoys bedtime stories, but don't start this treat unless you plan to continue.

The three-year-old may be fussy when he awakens. This may be due to bad dreams. A bad dream may cause him to awaken at night crying. Never make fun of him. Try to stay with him until he goes back to sleep. A night light may help. He may want to come into his parents' bed, but avoid this hard-to-break habit.

Eating

The three-year-old should feed himself and should eat with his family as much as possible. He should learn to use a fork as well as a spoon.

Provide your child with a balanced diet of plain, nourishing foods. Serve small portions of new foods. Let the child occasionally help choose what will be served.

Three-year-olds learn by example. Avoid showing him your own food dislikes and don't force him to eat food he doesn't like or want.

Medical and Dental Care

Take the child to the doctor and the dentist for regular checkups.

Babysitters

Anyone you leave your child with should be someone you know and trust.

Give the sitter telephone numbers of the doctor, ambulance, hospital, police, and fire department. Tell the sitter when you expect to be home and give instructions for reaching you or a trusted relative or friend in case of emergency. Call if you are delayed in getting home at the expected time.

By Mrs. Norine Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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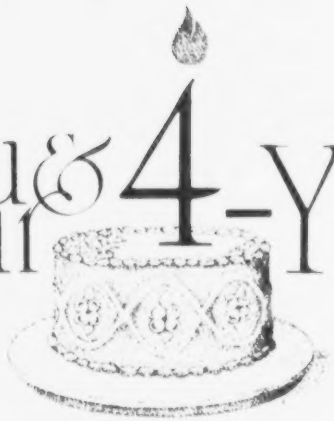
You & Your 4-YEAR-OLD



1-2, Ages & Stages

Personality

Most four-year-old children are energetic, silly, joyous, exuberant, and ready for anything. They like new people, places, games, playthings, and activities. The four-year-old has a lively mind. New thoughts, ideas, and bits of information fascinate him.

The child's emotions often are strong. He loves a lot--- and he hates a lot. He may "hate" spinach, anything ugly, or mother's new hairstyle.

He has an active imagination and moves in overdrive. Usually, he does a thing once and that is enough.

Sociability and Cooperation

Children at four enjoy each other as individuals and are eager for group play. Friendships may be quite positive and are based on shared activities.

Cooperation, sharing, and taking turns come easily to most four-year-olds. In fact, the child's love of big projects often makes the help of several children necessary.

Discipline

At this stage the child's curiosity and high motor drive are sometimes a little too much for both parents and the child. Your four-year-old likes and respects boundaries and limits, and he needs the security of external control as he restabilizes his internal control.

He tends to be out-of-bounds emotionally as well as physically. He laughs almost too much when things strike him as funny and tends to scream and howl when he is unhappy.

He also is verbally out-of-bounds. He exaggerates, boasts, swears, and lies. Most of this is done out of shear love for experimentation and manipulation of words. Parents should listen calmly, explain briefly the error and let it pass. The child's out-of-bounds behavior will pass if it is not reinforced. **Remember:** any significant adult reaction (anger or laughter) serves as reinforcement. If you'd like more information on discipline, please ask your Extension Home Economist for Information Sheet 1257 "Discipline: Love and Limits."

Bathroom Behavior

The child is interested in both the process and products of elimination. Out for a walk, the child may spot every deposit of a dog's bowel movement.

This concern about elimination extends to interest in bathrooms, both at home and in other places. Though he is interested in other people's toileting, he is private about his own.

By four years of age, most children are in control of both bowel and urinary eliminations. Accidents, if any, tend to occur simply because the child does not want to interrupt his play and puts off using facilities until it is too late. The parents may have to remind the child to take a "bathroom break."

Most children stay dry all night if picked up around midnight. If the midnight pickup doesn't work, just pad the child and bed to save on laundry, and make little comment about this immaturity since he will outgrow it.

Eating

Cutting food is the only feeding skill that is difficult for your four-year-old child. If he has a nutritious and appealing diet and there is no history of struggle over food, the child will eat small amounts of most foods. The appetite begins to increase around five.

Generally, the best attitude, even with difficult eaters, is for the adult to be casual and pay as little attention as possible. If the child thinks that eating matters a great deal to his parent, he is likely to use that power over them.

PS 0163

Bath and Dressing

The child is capable of bathing himself as long as someone suggests part by part what should be washed. Otherwise, he may get stuck and wash only one part each bath.

Dressing and undressing are accomplished without much help if clothes are laid out so each garment is correctly oriented.

Special difficulty may occur with buttoning although most four-year-olds can unbutton with ease.

Mental Development

Virtually everything a young child does is an example of his mind in action. The parent needs to answer his "whys," read to him daily, supply him with picture books, provide a reasonably rich, lively environment, and give plenty of love and attention. The child's cognitive development then takes care of itself.

By Mrs. Norine Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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You & Your 5-YEAR-OLD

1-2. Ages & Stages

Physical Activity

Five-year-olds are active children, and because they can balance themselves well, they hop, run, skip, and climb with ease. They are likely to be so active that they tire quickly. While they are usually in a pleasant mood, they are irritable when tired. Five-year-olds need time, space, and a variety of play equipment for indoor and outdoor muscle exercises. They need some supervision to help them alternate activity with quieter periods. Such items as books, paints, puzzles, musical records, and table games provide a child with something to do while he rests from physically strenuous activity.

Cooperation

Five-year-olds try to behave like adults, and they are anxious to please. They are delighted by praise and are likely to be friendly and talkative. Five-year-olds are happy to help around the house, and they should be encouraged to develop responsibility for certain tasks. For example, racks for hanging clothes should be placed within reach. Other such adjustments allow them to help their parents. Parents must have patience to help the child learn to do things, such as making beds, emptying the garbage, or cleaning the lavatory. However, it is well worth a parent's time to allow the child of this age to learn such tasks.

Five-year-olds are able and willing to make suggestions regarding participation in the family activities. Their suggestions should be respected by at least being heard. Five-year-olds are such imitators that much adult behavior is "instant-replayed" by them. For this reason, parents must remember to be models of "good" behavior.

Mental Development

Five-year-olds are aware of a written language and often pretend that they can read or write. They are interested in numbers and play number games with enthusiasm. Play equipment such as pencils, paper, an old typewriter, rubber stamps, clocks, chalkboards, rulers, calendars, tape measures, or scales stimulate five-year-olds to learn while they play. Dominoes are good for this age, and a play "office" or "store" can be fun.

Sociability

Most five-year-olds play well in small groups with other children. They are able to bargain for what they want and most disagreements are handled verbally rather than physically.

They are aware of the rights of other people, can understand how to take turns, and know the difference in "mine" and "yours." Five-year-olds should be allowed to participate in activities that include social interaction with other children...and they need time to be alone.

Creativity

The dramatic play of five-year-olds often is quite detailed. For example, in "playing house" they include intricate behaviors that may surprise adults when they can observe these children. Five-year-olds are creative with play equipment, art materials, and storytelling. Parents should try to provide children with space, materials, and an opportunity to explore and experiment to help develop creative potential. Music and dance are important creative outlets for children.

Five-year-olds can handle tools and should be allowed to do so (with supervision, of course). They can manage saws, hammers, screwdrivers, record players, and tape players. They can mix paints to achieve desired colors, and they try to paint realistic pictures.

Positive Image

To help children succeed, help them feel good about themselves. Did you ever notice how ineffective you are

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when you are not happy with yourself. The same thing happens to children when they are unhappy with themselves. Often when five-year-olds are misbehaving it is because they dislike themselves. Of course, this situation can produce a vicious cycle because the more they misbehave, the more they dislike themselves, and the more they misbehave, and so on.

Parents can best help children to like themselves---that is, to have a positive self-concept---by showing them that they are loved and by providing a secure environment.

Help your five-year-old find some task that he can do successfully. Helping a youngster learn how to do things and accepting a less-than-perfect standard of performance require patience, but provides your child an opportunity to succeed, to contribute to his family group, and to feel good about this achievement.

Tasks children might do include:

- setting the table
- making a bed
- building a bird feeder
- picking up pine cones or other debris from the yard
- feeding a pet
- helping in a garden
- bringing things for a baby brother or sister.

Children who feel unloved, insecure, and who fail more often than they succeed, are likely to be unhappy. A poor self-concept impacts negatively for the remainder of his life.

By Mrs. Norine Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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PROMOTE A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT

Your 3-year-old daughter is trying to dress herself. She gets the shirt and jeans on correctly, but puts her socks on inside out. Will she be more likely to get them right next time if you say, "Oh, Nancy, you put your socks on wrong again. Why can't you remember that the fuzzy part goes on the inside?" or "Good! You got your shirt and jeans on right. Why don't you just change your socks so the fuzzy part is inside."

The best response, of course, is the second one, because it emphasizes what Nancy did right and is more likely to make her feel confident. When children have confidence in themselves, they do better. They are eager to try new and harder things; they gain new skills and become even more confident and capable.

Self-confidence (positive self-concept) leads to success. On the other hand, when children think they cannot do anything right, they are afraid to try new things. They expect to fail. They avoid new challenges, so they never learn that they can do things. Their confidence never gets a chance to develop. Self-doubt (low self-concept) results in failure. To a large extent then, we become what we think we are:

Those who think they can do,
do.
Those who think they cannot,
do not.

This is true for all of us, but it is especially true for young children. The responses of parents and other adults have a powerful effect on children's actions. Adult reactions actually teach children how competent, or incompetent, they are.

Have you noticed how proud your children are of their accomplishments? They often urge you to, "Watch this!" or "Look at what I made!" Young children need to be seen as capable and strong, but they lack the skills and knowledge that grown-ups have. The list of things they can do is much shorter than the list of things they cannot do. They really need your help in learning that they can do things.

To many parents "common sense" says, "If I want my children to become capable, I must be sure to point out and correct all their mistakes." But constant criticism only teaches children that they cannot do things very well.

When parents emphasize what their children do right, however, they help children feel good about themselves. By letting children know how it feels to succeed, parents encourage children to keep trying.

To help your children develop confidence in themselves, try these ideas:

- Focus on your children's strengths and successes.
- Show them you have faith in their abilities.
- Provide them with experiences where they can succeed.
- Reflect their achievements in a positive but realistic manner.

Of course no parent can, or would want to, keep children from every possibility of failing. Children learn from failure, as well as success. Children who have learned that they are capable can accept their mistakes and weaknesses because they know that overall they are competent.

As the old saying goes, "Nothing succeeds like success." To let your children enjoy the sweet taste of success, set up an environment where initiative is more likely to lead to success than to failure:

- Dress your children in sturdy clothes that are easy to put on.
- Provide step stools and low hooks so they can do things for themselves.
- Buy plastic dishes and glasses to prevent accidents.
- Offer them a variety of physical, mental, and social experiences.

Encouragement

Self-confidence is like a ripple. When children feel capable in one area, the feeling is likely to spread to other areas of their lives. This ripple often begins when the child receives encouragement from parents.

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Encouragement builds and restores a child's self-confidence. Misbehavior is the usual outcome of discouragement. It is so much more satisfying to behave properly that most children would if they had confidence in their ability to succeed. Our methods of disciplining (training) children are often sequences of discouraging experiences, through either impossible demands, humiliations, indulgences, over-permissiveness, or neglect. Consequently, children need this confidence restored through encouragement. However, few adults know how to give encouragement.

Encouragement is more than praise. In fact, praise often causes discouragement because children consider it either as being undeserved or as your wish for them to succeed beyond their capacity. Encouragement expresses faith in children as they are, not in what they could be.

Which of these phrases, if said to you, would make you feel more encouraged (positive) about yourself? "That's very hard. I'll do it for you." or "That's hard but I believe you can do it." Or try this one, "There is still a sock in the corner." or "This room is looking much neater. I know you enjoy living in it when it is clean." In both cases, the second response makes a person feel better and elicits cooperation.

Here are some other examples of encouraging, rather than discouraging words:

Words That Encourage	Words That Discourge
You can do it.	You usually make mistakes, so be careful.
I have faith in you.	I doubt that you can do it.
You're doing well.	You can do better.
I enjoyed that song.	Your music is getting better, but you missed some notes at the end.
I can see you put a lot of effort into that.	That is a good job, but the corners aren't perfect.
Your playing has improved.	Well, you are playing a little better than last year.
You'll figure it out.	You had better get some help; that looks very difficult.

Other helpful phrases to put in your vocabulary and use sincerely with your children are, "That's a hard job," "You did a good job with..." "I appreciate what you did," "Let's figure this out together."

Use specific instances to encourage, not global praise. Say, "You took a good swing at the ball." not, "You are the best batter I ever saw."

Remember, every time you use the opportunity to encourage your child, you are helping to build a strong person who can be happy and self-confident.

Parental Power

As a parent, be careful in your use of power. It is important for parents to establish and enforce reasonable rules and limits. However, turn control over to your children gradually as they grow. Responsible children who are self-disciplined, have parents who teach decision making and who allow children to learn from the consequences of their choices.

If parents dominate children and use superior knowledge and strength to suppress the natural need for influence, children are stripped of self-respect and experience a loss of self-esteem.

When self-respect is lost (or not developed) the potential for violence and deviant behavior is fostered. Children who feel powerless often behave destructively towards themselves and/or others. This acting out is an undesirable attempt at gaining some control over their environment.

As a parent, use your power wisely while demonstrating respect and appreciation for your child's growing need for self-determination and a strong self-concept.

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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The Art Of Parenting

No wonder many parents today are confused. You may be rearing your children one way yet see and hear many other approaches to childrearing in the homes of your friends, in parent groups, in classrooms, on television, or in books and magazines. Because of these various and changing approaches to parenting, many parents never feel completely comfortable that they are doing the best possible job.

In addition, mothers and fathers are rarely taught how to parent. Almost any adult can become a mother or father, but childrearing requires practice and patience. There are some fundamentals of parenting that you should learn.

- Remember that parents cannot always stay calm and agreeable. After all, you are people, not unfeeling robots. Parents are asked to assume many roles: administrator, referee, friend, judge, chauffeur, cook, advisor. You are seldom able to be just yourselves. You are expected to remain calm and level-headed and never to lose your temper or to disagree. Trying to maintain this facade forces a parent to suppress healthy differences of opinion, feelings, and needs.

- It is the quality and not the quantity of time spent with your children that creates healthy family relationships. As parents, you should discuss with each other the disciplinary roles each will assume, considering the best ways to use your individual talents and time spent at home.

- Self-acceptance and mutual understanding between you and your children are keys to intelligent parenting. When parents cooperate with each other, children learn how to cooperate, and a foundation is laid for continuing parent-child communication.

- Parents should share the responsibility for disciplining their children. The threat of punishment can often create tension between parents and children. For example, if a mother uses the threat, "Just wait until your father gets home," she creates unnecessary tension between the children and their father. In this instance, the mother postpones punishment either because she does not want to be the punishing parent, or because she feels the father has more influence with the children. It is better for the parent who is with the children at the time of misbehavior to assume responsibility for discipline.

- Remember that children are also people. They too have feelings. You as parents must treat them as you would treat anyone special to you -- with respect, dignity, and love. Punishment and other parental obligations can be effectively accomplished only when you understand the developmental stages children go through. (Refer to MCES Information Sheets 1319–1323, You and Your 1-Year-Old – 5-Year-old.) You can relate to your children more easily when you understand the basic principles guiding their growth and development.

Permissive or Protective Approach

One of the concerns many parents have is whether to take a permissive or protective approach toward rearing their children. Actually, you should use a little of both. Children can and do thrive under many different approaches to parenting. The choice of an effective approach is not a matter of "either-or" but of finding a comfortable balance.

Children need freedom.

They need to be permitted to explore the world, use their senses, move about freely, and make mistakes. Opportunities like these give children room to grow and develop.

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Children need limits.

They want guidance, advice, responsibility, and routine. By protecting your children from hurting themselves and others, you help them feel secure.

Too much freedom overwhelms children.

When parents let children do anything they want, children feel abandoned. They think their parents do not care about them. Such indulged children often become self-centered and demanding and have trouble getting along with other people.

Too many limits smother children.

Parents who do everything for their children interfere with their growth. If children don't learn to care for themselves, they are more likely to get hurt when their parents are not around. Overprotected children can become fearful, passive, dependent - even resentful and hostile.

Achieve a balance.

Some children can handle more freedom and responsibility than others. Also, some situations call for more control than others. There are few absolutes when it comes to parenting - just general guidelines:

- Give your children permission to grow and protection from harm.
- Stay away from the extremes of overprotection and overpermissiveness.
- Strike a balance that is comfortable for you and your child.

Just where you are between the extremes is not of major importance. What is important is that your style of parenting be reasonable and motivated by love and respect for your child. Between the extremes are many approaches that make room both for your sanity and your child's growth.

Understanding Behavior

A child has a purpose for every action. A well-behaved child finds acceptance and approval by fulfilling expectations and by making a useful contribution. The child who misbehaves is trying to (1) get attention, (2) prove his power, (3) seek revenge or (4) show and use inadequacy. Whichever of these four goals he pursues, his behavior is based on the belief that he has no other way to achieve his goals. His goals will vary with circumstances. He may try to attract attention at one moment, and assert his power to seek revenge at another. You can more easily identify the reasons for your child's misbehavior if you carefully study the effect of the misbehavior on others.

Getting Attention

Children may first get attention through socially acceptable and pleasant means such as charm, cuteness, and bright remarks. However, when a younger sibling steals the show, or when parents expect children to give up this childish behavior, they will try any method of gaining the attention they need. Unpleasant by-products such as humiliation, punishment, or even physical pain do not matter as long as their main purpose is achieved. Children had rather be spanked than ignored.

Gaining Power

Efforts to control often lead to a deadlock over power and superiority between child and adult. Use positive discipline methods (refer to MCES Information sheet 1257 Discipline: Love and Limits) to avoid a battle for power since parents often lose the struggle. Even when parents win, they lose, since overpowering children only makes them more convinced of the value of power and more determined to strike back.

Taking Revenge

In this battle for power and domination, the feelings may become so bitter that the child has only one desire, to seek revenge. Physically destructive behavior, or the sentence, "I don't love you, Mommy," are examples of exacting revenge. The older the child, the more sophisticated the revenge.

Displaying Inadequacies

Children who are passive or who have given up any hope of positive attention, expect only defeat, and they stop trying to participate. They hide themselves behind a show of real or imagined inferiority. They use their inability as a protection so that nothing will be required or expected of them. By not participating, they try to avoid more humiliating or embarrassing experiences.

Only if children feel accepted and have confidence in themselves, will they use constructive behavior. Antagonism and fear are always expressed in negative behavior.

By paying attention to your child's behavior and achieving a balance in your parenting style, you can assure a good start towards effective parenting.

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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Loving Your Children

Getting the Message Across

"The supreme happiness in life is the conviction that we are loved"
– Victor Hugo

Of course you care about your children. That is why you are reading this. And, like most parents, you probably make many sacrifices to feed, clothe, and educate your children. You may brag about them to anyone who will listen. Perhaps you even carry their pictures around to show off to your friends.

Yes, with few exceptions, all parents love their children. Yet not all children feel loved. Even when their parents love them, some children think that no matter what they do, they are not wanted. Others learn that their parents care about them only when they behave in certain ways. Not all children are lucky enough to know whatever they say or do, their parents care.

Clearly, **being** loved is not the same as **feeling** loved. It is not enough to know **you** love your children. You have to be sure **they** know it, too. You have to show them you love them just the way they are, just because they are.

Loving your children, then, is largely a matter of getting the message across.

Hidden Messages

With children, it is often the little things that count. You may have scrimped and saved to buy a bigger and better home. But young children do not know that such acts express your love for them.

Instead, simple, everyday events tell young children whether or not you value them. Your presence, a smile, a gentle touch and a kind word spell "I love you" to a child.

In the same way, day-to-day happenings can tell children they are not valued very highly. Unintentionally, your words and actions can convey to children that you do not care.

Think about how some of the things you say and do might look from a child's point of view:

Do you...

...tend to feed, clothe and bathe your baby hurriedly, never taking advantage of this time to touch, talk and play?

...only show your affection for your children when they do something that pleases you?

If you are always in a hurry, your child might be learning not that you are busy, but that he or she is not important. If you only express your love under certain conditions, your child may be learning that you love him – **IF** he obeys or **IF** he does not wet the bed or **IF** he does not make any mistakes. And if children receive many such messages, they may begin to think that you are not very glad to have them.

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Successful Signals

Children who feel unloved act very differently from those who feel loved. They spend lots of time trying to reassure themselves and other people of their worth. They are very cautious about trying new things, for failure hurts them deeply.

Children who know they are loved, on the other hand, do not have to waste time proving their worth. They are not afraid to try out their wings. They know that even if they fail, they can still count on your love and respect.

Be sure your children feel secure about your love for them:

- Look at what your words and actions could be telling your children about themselves.
- Find ways to show your children that no matter what, you love them.

This does not mean that if you ever get angry or frustrated with your children they are ruined forever. Children do not need perfect parents. Ordinary people will do. If the overall climate you create is one of love and respect, your children will learn they are valued–

just the way they are–
just because they are–
no ifs, ands, or buts.

Love Letters

Few things will be more important in deciding your children's future than their sense of self-worth. How they feel about themselves will affect whom they choose as friends, how they get along with others, and how well they make use of their abilities – in other words, all aspects of their lives. The strategies described below can strengthen your children's self-worth by letting them know you love and value them.

Pay Attention to Your Children.

Take time to talk to them, listen to them, and show interest in their activities and interests. Try to find times when you are not hurried or tense and can focus just on them.

Express Your Affection Often Through Physical Contact.

With babies, this means holding and cuddling. As children get older, you can offer hugs, kisses, caresses, an arm over the shoulder, or a pat on the back. Sometimes the right words are hard to find, but a gentle hug says it all.

Treat Your Children With the Same Respect You Show Adults.

Too often we reserve one set of manners for adults and another for children. We may embarrass our children by scolding or criticizing them in front of others. Or we may get so involved in a conversation we forget their presence. Children are no less sensitive than adults and deserve the same kind of respect.

Tell Your Children They Are Appreciated.

Do not wait until they get good grades. Do not limit your praise to their good looks or manners. Let them know you enjoy them and think they are great all the time.

Respond to Your Children With Patience and Understanding

When your childs spills his milk for the third time in a row, or hits his sister over the head with a toy shovel, it is easy to treat him as a criminal. Try, though, to see the child as someone who needs your help in controlling his body and emotions.

Respect Children's Feelings and Abilities.

Because of their size, we sometimes forget that children are people, too. They have a right to privacy and to feelings of their own. We may have to remind ourselves not to carry children when they can get there on their own or to speak for them when they can do this for themselves.

Adapted from Leaflet 163 *Loving Your Children: Getting the Message Across,* prepared by Billie H. Frazier, Human Development Specialist, Extension Home Economics, University of Maryland. Distributed in Mississippi by Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist.

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THE Single Parent FAMILY

Single-parent families can result from desertion, separation, death, serious illness, single-parent adoption, unwed parenthood, employment, or any crisis that requires the prolonged absence of one parent. The cause is not important, but the maintaining of strong family life is critical.

Each individual situation is somewhat different from any other, but single-parent families share common experiences. In all one-parent families, adults and children alike should accept the family status and try to strengthen parent-child relationships.

If you are part of a one-parent family, take courage in knowing that you are not alone. More than six million men and women are rearing their children without companion parents.

Often children in one-parent families may worry that their family is "different," and it is up to the adult in the family to help the children accept their status and learn to live and grow in their family situation. Healthy family relationships can develop in single-parent families if children and parents have positive attitudes about themselves and their families.

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Strengths of Single Parent Families

Children in single-parent homes usually learn to assume responsibility, whereas youngsters in two-parent families often have little responsibility for making the home function smoothly. They consequently lack an understanding of the time, money, and effort that homemaking requires. Children in one-parent families of necessity must assume more responsibility at home, and so they learn to appreciate the things parents work hard to provide.

Realistic Views of Marriage

Children in one-parent homes often have realistic and cautious views of marriage and family life. They are less likely to confuse marriage with a solution to all problems. Adolescents in single-parent homes know firsthand that it is difficult to keep the family going, and they usually take a greater interest in learning parenting skills. Their experiences can give them a healthy respect for marriage and family life and a realization of how crucial it is to choose a marriage partner carefully. They also learn the importance of being prepared for a career.

Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is another trait children and parents in single-parent homes usually develop. Because the children have only one resident parent, and that parent is probably employed, they will often be at home alone. They can learn to enjoy being on their own, and they can take care of their own needs. Learning to be content alone as well as with other people is a valuable life skill.

Strong Self-Concepts

Self-concepts can be strengthened in one-parent families. Initially, many single parents and their children experience a drop in their economic and social standing as well as in self concepts. Most experience guilt feelings and a sense of hopelessness; overcoming these negative concepts, however, is in itself an indication of inner strength. Although support groups and counseling are helpful in overcoming hurt felt by family members, most of the healing comes from individual and family strengths. As family members recover from their hurt, they develop self esteem, growing both as an individual and as a family member.

Understanding of Adults

Children in single-parent families gain a special understanding of adults. Many youngsters idolize their parents, expecting them to be able to make everything perfect. Children who grow up in single-parent homes usually realize that adults also have problems and need help from others.

Strong Parent-Child Relationships

Parent-child relationships can be strengthened. Children and parents who weather the crisis of becoming a single-parent family usually find their relationship is strengthened. As they experience the joys and frustrations of one-parent home life, they become more loving, communicative, and supportive.

Pitfalls To Avoid

There are some role-patterns single parents sometimes fall into which should be avoided. Here is a partial list of some of these roles:

- Buddy – The parent tries to become the child's friend or sibling.
- Companion – The parent wants the child to meet the parent's need for adult companionship and assume the responsibilities of a spouse.
- Enforcer – The parent overemphasizes discipline to compensate.
- Entertainer – The parent amuses child with movies, restaurants, ballgames.
- One-track – The parent views parenting as the only reason for living.
- Sufferer – The parent constantly complains about money, time, work.
- Superhuman – The parent tries to do everything perfectly.
- Victim – The parent asks the child to take sides.

At one time or another most parents fall into one or more of these roles. The problem is that single parents are likely to fall into a role and stay there with no counterbalance from another adult.

Some single parents, overwhelmed by guilt, frustration, and loneliness, complain about their situation. It is important not to dwell on the negative aspects of being a single parent. Complaining serves no good purpose and delays adjustment for the parent as well as for the children.

Other single parents may try to deny the fact that their family life is different from any other. They attempt to be both father and mother to their children and try to run a fairy tale home. This approach is unrealistic and usually does more harm than good. It is important for children to accept their situation and realize their family life is good even though it might be different from that of their friends.

Children are sometimes embarrassed about having only one parent and try to keep others from knowing about it. Parents should explain over and over again that all families have problems. As children observe other families, and as they experience their own strong family life, they will see that almost all families have one thing in common -- loving concern for one another.

Guidelines for Single Parents

- Reassure children that they did not cause the situation, whether it be divorce, separation, illness, or death.
- Warn them to expect sympathy or embarrassment from others and help them to respond in a sincere, simple and positive way. Teach your child to say matter-of-factly: "My parents are divorced," or, "My father is dead," or, "My mom and I are my family."
- Be prepared for the loneliness that may accompany birthdays, holidays and vacations. Make plans to do some special activity to ease the loneliness.

- Try to retain some stability in traditions, friends, and surroundings to strengthen your family life.
- When there is a function for dads and kids only, or moms and kids only, find a friend or relative who is willing to play the role of the absent parent.
- Make it clear that yours is not a broken home and does not need fixing; it works quite well.

Special Concerns

During the initial crisis that creates the separation within the family, the single parent may be too upset to discuss the situation with the child. At this point it is best to state what has happened and explain that talking about it hurts. Later, parents and children can communicate with each other about the situation naturally and without undue emphasis.

Honest Discussions

Most children in one-parent families say they wished their parents had used exact terms like "divorced," "dead," "deserted," or "not married" when they explain the family situation. Glossing over the facts by saying "apart for a little while" or "not live here anymore" were confusing to the children and made them wonder what was really happening. Often children hope their parents will reunite. This should be answered directly, calmly, and honestly.

A child's self-concept is closely linked to the identity of both parents, so it is healthy for a single parent to teach children to have good feelings toward the absent parent. This does not mean that an inaccurate view has to be presented. Children need to know their parents' faults, but they should also know their good points.

Trying to gloss over the truth will lead to distrust. Instead, focus on what will strengthen parent-child relationships and develop positive feelings. Children like to know about the parents' appearance and personality. Again, they need to be told over and over again that they did not cause the situation and that they cannot control it.

Independence and Discipline

Raising children to be independent is a hard job for all parents. Parents tend to feel that their experience, knowledge and wisdom can save their children pain long after the children feel perfectly willing to increase their own level of responsibility. Even though parents want their children to be independent adults, it is tough to let them go. This task seems especially difficult for single parents.

All parents should set reasonable limits and see that children understand what the limits are. There is no difference in this respect between the single parent and partner parents. Honesty and fairness are the most useful tools to successful discipline.

Social Life of Parents

When single parents begin to develop a social life again, they often find that their dating seems to disturb parent-child relationships. The child may resent the person the parent is dating, or at the opposite extreme, may treat each date as a potential step-parent. Some single parents resort to dishonesty in dealing with this situation; others just do not talk about it and try to ignore the child's concern. Still others seek the child's approval before dating. None of these approaches is particularly healthy.

Before you begin dating, explain to the child that you love different people in different ways and that people can be loyal to several relationships at the same time. Use illustrations they understand like the way they love you, grandmother, sibling, neighbor or friend. Stress the importance of the parent-child relationship, but emphasize that children and parents should not give up their own relationships. Adults need adult relationships. Sacrificing yourself for your children's needs denies your need to be an individual. It can also build resentment within you against your children.

There are some specific techniques that help children understand their parent's social life. First of all, be honest. Children have vivid imaginations and can imagine really strange things. Choose dates that are right for you, not your child. Try to eliminate opportunities for conflict between your dates and your child. Do not force them to spend time together. Then be discreet. Most children have trouble understanding parental dating behavior.

Special Opportunities

All children and parents have opportunities for growth and learning. If you are a single parent, you can see your situation as an overwhelming burden, or you can look at it as a challenge to grow into a stronger person. A positive attitude will go a long way toward enhancing your growth as an individual and as a family.

Most parents want a perfect life for their children. One of the best lessons a child can learn is to accept and make the best of an imperfect life. Single-parent families often have many opportunities for growth in learning to accept imperfections. The child who learns this concept early is indeed fortunate in preparing for the future.

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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Parent-Teen Communication

Think back to when your teen was younger. Do you recall saying something like, "I'll be glad when you're older so I can talk to you and you'll understand me the first time?"

Now that your child is a teenager, do you still have to repeat everything once or twice? Are your needs disregarded? When you are genuinely interested and offer help, are you told that you "just don't understand"?

Do you wonder what went wrong? If so, don't feel alone. Many other parents are asking the same questions.

Changing Communications and Relationships

Many people don't communicate well. When this happens, relationships usually suffer.

The relationship between you and your teen depends on good communication. As this relationship changes from parent-child to adult-adult, you will change the way you talk to one another. Each of you will experience "growing pains." Careful listening and controlled confrontations will help your relationship develop.

Listen Carefully

It is easier for your teen to talk to you if it is clear you will really listen. Good listening skills are one of the most powerful tools a parent can have, but these skills take practice. Listening means more than just hearing what a person is saying. It means letting him or her know you recognize the feelings behind what is being said and, at times, what is not being said.

This is important for you to remember. If you don't zero in on the person's feelings, you might miss the whole point.

Compare the following discussions between a mother and her teen-age daughter. Which is more helpful?

Teen: That teacher is unfair! I'll never do well in that class!

Parent: Of course you will, dear, you just need to study a little harder, that's all.

Teen, leaving the room: Oh, mother, you just don't understand!

OR

Teen: That teacher is unfair! I'll never do well in that class!

Parent: You're feeling angry and disappointed, and you want to give up.

Teen: Well, how would you feel if you had a teacher who mumbled all the time and you couldn't understand what she was trying to say? Huh? What would you do?

Parent: Well, I suppose I would either ask her to speak up or try sitting closer to hear.

Teen leaves, smiling: Well, maybe I could ask her to work her jaws a little more. Thanks, Mom.

The second response recognizes the teen's feelings. It shows acceptance and concern and allows the teenager to feel heard and to want to keep talking.

Listening can be a very effective tool. By listening you can help your teen clarify feelings and consider problems more rationally to arrive at a solution. Keep this in mind the next time your teen comes to you with a problem or success.

Benefits of Listening

1. Provides understanding
2. Is non-judgemental
3. Promotes warmth and closeness
4. Helps problem-solving process
5. Demonstrates respect

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Control Confrotations

There can be times in a parent-teen relationship when your teenager's behavior can interfere with your needs or rights. For example, your youngster may use your car and bring it back with the gas tank empty or fix late night snacks and leave the kitchen in a mess.

To confront your teen effectively, you must make your feelings, meanings, and intentions understood. When it's necessary to confront your teen, remember to do so in a way that doesn't put your teen on the defensive. Confrontation can be effective if you remember not to do so in a way that lowers your teen's self-esteem.

One way of doing this involves using "I" messages rather than "you" messages. "You" messages lay blame and convey criticism. They suggest that the other person is at fault. "You" messages are familiar to most of us. They sound something like this: "Do you always have to play your music so loud?" They are simply verbal attacks.

"I" messages focus on understanding the problem, not blaming someone. A parent who uses "I" messages is admitting that both the parent and the teen are a part of the problem.

A good "I" message has three parts:

1. Specifically describe the situation which is causing you problems. (Just describe; don't blame.) "When you don't call or come home at the time we agreed . . . ."
2. State the effect the situation has on you. "I don't know where you are."
3. Identify the feeling that you have. ". . . and I begin to worry that something might have happened to you."

You want to concentrate on three things:

1. The situation.
2. Its effect.
3. Your feelings.

If you take the earlier example and put it in this formula, you have: "When you don't call or come home at the time we agreed, I worry that something might have happened to you, because I don't know where you are." Stress the word **because** and your **feelings** so the teen will realize just how the behavior is affecting you.

An "I" message depends on the situation. The most important things to remember about "I" messages are that they focus on you and the situation, not the other person, and they do not place blame on anyone.

This kind of communication helps parents and teens maintain a good relationship.

Conflicts are Natural

No matter how much confidence you have in your teen, it is natural for you to feel a little uneasy. It is also easy to envy the freedom, opportunities, and choices teenagers have today. Perhaps you remember your own teenage years, the risks you took, the confusion you felt.

Maybe you are going through your own personal crisis of dealing with "middle age." Just as you are accepting reality and asking, "What have I accomplished?" and "Where do I go from here?" your teen-ager is rocking the boat with questions like "Who am I?" or "What will I accomplish in life?"

Your teenager may not come to you for answers. Teens may go to friends or other adults. Often the parenting methods that worked so well for you before no longer seem effective. These changes can be painful, but it is important to remember that they are natural and healthy. A new and enjoyable relationship can develop. For you to make the most of this time, it is important to know problems may develop and how to handle them.

Teen-age Development

Teenagers are often caught between their desire for independence and their actual need for parenting and protection. Many teens resent dependence because they think it is an admission of weakness. They are developing the ability to be inter-dependent.

It is not unusual for teenagers to react with anger or rebellion at seemingly innocent suggestions or comments from parents. This anger is often expressed in comments like "my parents won't let me grow up" or "they treat me like a child."

Teenagers question their parents' ideas. Teenagers no longer think their parents have all the answers. Sometimes teenagers are arrogant. They complain that their parents are "old fashioned" or "don't know what's going on."

Modern Pressures

Being a teenager is more difficult today. Children reach physical sexual maturity much earlier and face a longer period of dependence upon parents. They have more choices and often have fewer guidelines.

The teenage years may be especially confusing if you are absorbed in your own problems. If the unspoken communication from you is "Please don't cause me any more problems; I have enough of my own," your teenager may complain that "You aren't interested enough even to try to understand my problems."

Express Your Understanding

When your child reaches adolescence, you must develop new parenting skills.

1. Take cues from your teen. Probably the most difficult task will be adjusting to your teenager's unpredictable personality. One minute you are dealing with a child and the next with a growing adult. Many times you will have to "play it by ear," even though this is hard to do. Remember, you know your child best. You have a good idea of what your child can handle and what your child's behavior means.

2. Give teenagers clear rules. Adolescents need to know what to expect and need your help in setting reasonable limits. They may resent or test these limits, but don't be afraid to insist on behavior that reflects your values. At the same time, respect your teenager's feelings and opinions by being consistent and willing to discuss the reasons for your decisions. Teenagers gain strength and self-respect from clearly defined limits.

3. Stay Calm. Your teenager is no longer a child and doesn't want to be treated like one. However, you may hear some strange, strong statements. Remember, it's normal for teenagers to test authority. Don't get defensive and begin a shouting match. Resorting to punishment usually doesn't help your teenager develop self-control. Discuss feelings about the situation with your teen and work out mutually acceptable standards or simply agree to disagree.

4. Accept adolescent behavior. Sometimes teenagers are moody, restless, critical, and self-centered. Although this may be hard to tolerate, it reflects the inner turmoil that is part of growing up. You can accept your teen's behavior without approving of it.

5. Give teenagers privacy. You have the right to know where your teenager is, but teenagers also need lives of their own. Sometimes it is hard to know where to draw the line. Don't expect to know every detail. Respecting your teen's right to privacy shows trust and indicates that you value your teenager's independence.

6. Be supportative and encourage independence. Teenagers are moving into the world, and they need to make decisions about their lives when possible. However, they also need your help and encouragement.

It is natural for you, as a parent, to want to share the experiences you've had with your children. By telling the things you learned, you hope your teen can avoid the mistakes you made. Giving advice, however, does have pitfalls. Advice doesn't always help teens solve their own problems. It may cause your teen to depend on you.

Also, many teens resist taking advice. They may not be sure that your advice will work or they just don't want to do it that way. And, if your advice doesn't work, guess who gets the blame?

Allow your teen to take responsibility and make choices. Try not to ciritcize a mistake or place blame. When your child handles responsibility well, pay compliments and gradually give more opportunities.

Despite inevitable problems, most parents enjoy their teenage children and are proud of them. Your teenager loves and admires you also, although this may be hard to express openly.

You can meet the challenge of teen years with the same qualities you used in the past: patience, love, skill, and a sense of humor.

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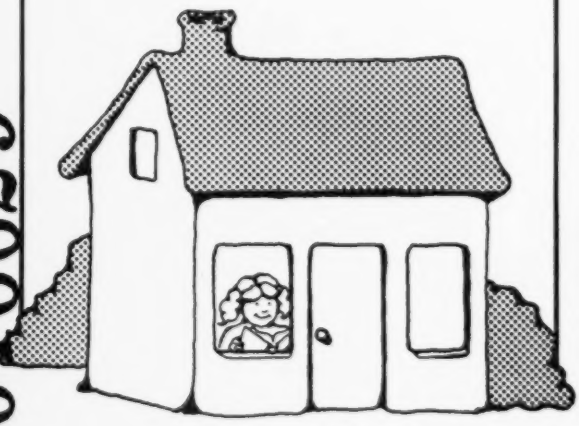
Self Care For Children



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Many working parents who have young children must leave for work in the mornings before school opens. They also get home in the afternoon later than the children do. These "hours between" present a problem for working parents.

The kind of care the child receives may vary, perhaps from one season to another or from one developmental age to another. However, the quality of care the child receives should not vary. The most important question to ask if you are in this situation is, "How will this child care arrangement help promote the positive growth and development of my child?"

Communicate with your child. Listen to feelings and concerns. Find out how your child feels about various options available. If a child is in any way afraid, you should make other arrangements.

Consider the age and maturity level of your child, as well as the community you live in. If you live in a neighborhood or area that is supportive and stable, your decision may be different than if you live in an area that is unfriendly and mobile.

Other considerations should include the number of available recreation areas and playgrounds, local crime rates, friendliness among neighbors, ages of community residents, numbers and ages of children in the neighborhood, and the amount of support you can count on from neighbors and family members.

If you decide to provide care away from your home, do an extensive check of possibilities. Consider all options. You might enroll your child in an after-school educational program, or you might consider a community day care center. Is there a mother close to home who could assume responsibility of transportation and care at the appropriate times? Is there a family member, neighbor or good friend who could help out as needed? Check local recreational programs. Also, some working parents agree to sit in the evening or on weekends for neighbors' children in exchange for before- and after-school child care.

Encourage your child to develop friendships and to plan home-visit exchanges with friends after school. If you do not want your child to have friends over without adult supervision, you can arrange for a playmate to visit on a weekend in exchange for a chaperoned visit after school on a weekday.

If your child does stay home alone after school, make plans for a visit, a music lesson, a club meeting, or an athletic program at least one day a week to break the monotony of being home alone.

If you decide that your child will spend some time at home alone, be sure you are completely comfortable about your decision. If you in any way feel uncertain, you may pass your anxieties and uncertainty on to your child, thus increasing fears and anxieties.

Here are some suggestions for parents who must leave their children at home alone:

1 Make your home as burglarproof as possible. Put bolts on windows, install lighting around the exterior of the home, and place a system of timers in the house programmed to turn on lights at different times. These extras will cost a few dollars, and while they still do not guarantee safety, they provide a sense of security for the child and for the parent as well.

2 Tell your child not to go into the house after school if the door is ajar, if a window is broken, or if anything else looks unusual. Give instructions to go to a neighbor's house or a store to call and wait for you. Emphasize that the house should not be entered until an adult arrives.

3 Teach your child what to do in case of an emergency and how and when to call the police, fire department, and local ambulance service. Being prepared for emergencies helps to reduce your child's fears.

4 Tell your child which of the adults living near your home can be turned to in time of need. If you are new to the neighborhood, canvass the area for responsible neighbors. Introduce your child to them. Make certain there is always someone available while you are away.

5 The telephone is important. Many parents ask that their children telephone as soon as they arrive home. It is a good idea for parents to telephone their child once or twice during the time they are at home alone. Rather than feeling negative about these phone calls, most children see the calls as signs of parental concern. Some parents complain that they get anxious or frustrated when they try to call home and the line is always busy. If this is your problem, consider having an additional phone installed. A second line can usually be maintained for a nominal monthly charge, and this hotline might provide low-cost peace of mind.

Another solution for the busy telephone problem is to designate special times when your child can, or cannot, use the phone to call friends. That way you will be able to get through at some point during the day. You might want to have your phone company connect the "call waiting" service to the line you already have. It is relatively inexpensive. The "call waiting" is like having a "hold" button on your phone, or better yet, two separate lines. If your child is talking on the phone, there will be a signal when you call. To answer the second call, the child just pushes down the receiver button for a moment and will then be connected with you. To get back to the first party, the child depresses the button again.

6 Plan activities that will keep your child occupied to help reduce fear of staying alone. Chores and projects are excellent ways to do this. A bored child sitting at home alone waiting for mom and dad to return is more likely to "hear noises" than an active child.

7 Provide a pet. Kids especially like dogs and cats. The more frightened a child may be, the more likely he or she will prefer a large dog. However, if you cannot handle owning a large pet, point out that small dogs have big barks and make equally loyal friends.

8 Prepare a safety kit. It should contain an identification card, a list of important telephone numbers, the correct change for several phone calls, and perhaps enough money for bus or cab fare. One parent taped such a kit to the inside of her child's lunchbag. The kit was never used, but the child felt better just knowing it was there.

9 Sit down with your child and go over specific house rules. Discuss what you expect the child to do when a stranger comes to the door or when someone calls asking for their parents. Role playing is a good way to teach these skills.

Here are a few additional things to think about: May friends come and play with your child when no adult is present? Is it all right for the child to go to a friend's house if the child leaves a note? Are any toys or play equipment "off limits" until you get home? What about cooking? Make sure the child knows what is expected. Show appreciation when the rules are obeyed.

10 Set up a routine with your child to help the child feel secure and responsible. Decide on a time for play and a time for homework and/or household chores. Make sure the child has a checklist of chores that are supposed to be done.

11 Most kids are hungry when they get home from school. Let your children know what and how much they can eat—either by leaving a note or establishing a specific snack place in the refrigerator. Set up a routine of eating a snack and disposing of dirty dishes.

12 Be punctual. Children seem to be able to cope fairly well until the time a parent is expected to arrive. Every minute after that can seem like an eternity. Tell your child exactly when you can be expected home and try to be there.

One final word. Be flexible and versatile. Do not be afraid to change your child care arrangements. Continually evaluate all aspects of the situation to be sure that your child is receiving the best possible care you can provide. You must feel that what your child is doing while you are not at home does, in fact, promote his or her positive growth and development.

Distributed in Mississippi by **Norine R. Barnes**, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist. Adapted from *Home Alone? Working Parents and Child Care* by Billie H. Frazier, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Maryland.

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2 - 4 General

Protecting Mississippi's Children

PS 016629

Child abuse/neglect is repeated mistreatment or neglect of a child by parents or other caretakers. Abuse is an act that is not accidental and that causes physical or emotional damage.

Child neglect is the failure of a parent or guardian to provide for the child's basic needs including food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, love, and supervision.

Child abuse/neglect can happen anywhere, in poor, middle-class, and in well-to-do homes. One or both parents or another family member may be involved.

Types of Child Abuse/Neglect

Physical - shaking, beating, burning, or failure to provide adequate food, shelter, and clothing.

Emotional - psychological neglect, verbal assault, and excessive pressure.

Sexual - rape, molestation, incest, prostitution, or use of children for pornographic purposes.

Effects of Child Abuse

- Child may never be able to love or trust others and may always have a poor self-image.
- Physical injuries inflicted in childhood may result in permanent, crippling deformity.
- Often abused children become teenagers or adults who act in criminal or other violent, antisocial ways. Children who are abused often become abusive themselves.
- Parents who abuse their children feel guilty and lose respect for themselves.

Causes of Child Abuse

Parents often abuse their children as a reaction to past or present problems or stresses. Every parent has the potential to abuse a child at some time under certain stressful circumstances. Here are some stressful circumstances that sometimes lead to abuse by parents:

Immaturity

Very young, insecure parents often can't understand a child's behavior or needs.

Lack of knowledge

Parents don't know or understand the various stages of child development and have no knowledge of how to raise a child.

Unrealistic expectations

Parents expect children to behave as adults at all stages of development.

Unmet emotional needs

Parents who can't relate well to other adults may expect their children to satisfy their need for love, protection, and self-esteem.

Crises

Financial, job, marital, or legal problems, as well as illness, can cause parents to take their problems out on a child.

Social isolation

Parents have no friends or family to help with the heavy demands of small children.

Drugs or alcohol

Parents are limited in ability to properly care for children because of a dependency on drugs or alcohol.

Mistreated in childhood

Many abusive adults were themselves abused as children and as a result have a poor self-image. They have no model of successful family life to pattern.

Characteristics of Child Abuse

Neglect

Child's Appearance

- Often not clean; clothes dirty or wrong for the weather.
- Comes to school without breakfast, often does not have lunch or lunch money.
- Needs glasses, dental care, or other medical attention.

Child's Behavior

- Frequently absent from school.
- Begs or steals food.
- Socially isolated.

Parent or Caretaker

- Misuses alcohol or other drugs.
- Has unsettled home life.
- Seems very uninterested about what happens; feels that nothing is going to make much difference anyway.
- Isolated from friends, relatives, neighbors; doesn't know how to get along with others.
- Has long-term chronic illnesses.
- Has history of neglect as a child.

Physical Abuse

Child's Behavior

- Reports injury by parents.
- Displays anti-social behavior; is often a loner; frequently breaks or damages things; unusually shy; avoids other people including children; seems too anxious to please, and too ready to let other people say and do things to him without protest.
- Often late or absent from school; hangs around after school is dismissed.
- Wears long sleeves or other concealing clothing.
- If injury is discovered, child's explanation is not believable.
- Seems frightened of parents.
- Seems to be in desperate need of affection and attention.

Child's Appearance

- Severe bruises, welts, burns or fractures.
- Bite marks.
- Frequent injuries.

Parent or Caretaker

- Has history of abuse as a child.
- Uses harsh discipline inappropriate for age or child's behavior.
- Offers unbelievable explanation of child's injury.
- Seems unconcerned or angry about child.
- Sees child as bad, evil, a monster, etc.
- Misuses alcohol or other drugs.
- Attempts to hide child's injury.
- Isolated.

Emotional Abuse

Child's Appearance

- No apparent difference from other children.

Child's Behavior

- Hard to get along with; demanding; frequently causes trouble.
- Shy; overly anxious to please; submissive.
- Either unusually adult in actions or very immature.

Parent or Caretaker

- Blames or belittles child.
- Is cold and rejecting.
- Treats children in the family unequally.
- Ignores child.

Sexual Abuse

Child's Appearance

- Experiences pain or itching in the genital area.
- Has veneral disease.

Child's Behavior

- Appears withdrawn.
- Has poor relationships with other children.
- Is unwilling to participate in physical activities.
- Has inappropriate knowledge of sex.
- States he/she has been sexually assaulted by parent/caretaker.

Parent or Caretaker

- Very protective or jealous of child.
- Has some difficulty maintaining adult friendships.

Suspected Child Abuse

Reporting a case of suspected child abuse to the Mississippi Department of Public Welfare is the first step. Reports may be made 7 days a week, 24 hours a day (1-800-222-8000).

A social worker from the county Department of Public Welfare will investigate and determine whether maltreatment has occurred. When you call, give as much information as possible including:

- Child's (children) name, address, sex, age.
- Facts about the injury or suspected harm.
- Any knowledge of earlier injuries or problems.
- Name of person responsible for suspected maltreatment.
- Parents' name.
- Facts about the family.
- Your name and where you can be reached.

Anonymous reports are accepted; however, persons who report cases are encouraged to give their names so that if further help or information is needed, contact can be made. All reports and any information gathered during the investigation of the report are confidential. Under the law, if you report in good faith you have immunity from criminal or civil liability.

Families Need Help

There are many positive steps you can take to protect children and help families under stress.

For Parents Under Stress

- Learn to let off steam in safe ways and keep the hard job of being a parent under control. When your child's behavior is troublesome, count to ten; put child in a safe area and go to another room; take ten minutes to relax and take a deep breath; take a walk or call a friend.
- Call a community agency or church. They are there to help you. Some agencies don't ask your name. Ask them what kind of help they can give you for your problem or need. If someone is not available the minute you call, don't give up. Try again.

For Friends or Relatives

- Be the person a distressed person can talk to. Listen without judging. Encourage the parent to talk out anger and frustration.
- Offer to babysit or take care of the children for a few days if you can.
- Urge troubled families to seek help. Learn what is available in your neighborhood and tell them about it. Offer to make an appointment and go with them on their first visit.
- If efforts like this do not help and a child is in danger of being hurt, you should call: 1-800-222-8000. Upon request your name will be withheld from the family.

The cycle of child abuse and neglect can be broken.
It is up to us.

By Norine R. Barnes, Extension Child and Family Development Specialist

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Your Child's Emotions

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Your Child's Emotions

Our society tends to be overly anxious and stressful. The root causes of mental and emotional problems are complex in origin and solution. However, there are things parents can do to promote the emotional and mental health of their children.

- Help your child identify and understand feelings by listening out loud. Listening out loud means talking with the child about activities and commenting on reactions in "feeling terms." For example, as Mike plays with a truck, he has many feelings. He grows interested, then excited. He says, "Look at my truck, how fast it goes!" Comment on his feelings by saying, "It's fun to play with the truck, and you're happy that it goes so fast." In this way, he can put the name "happy" to his feelings. The child also knows that you are interested in his activities and understand his emotions. The child may respond with a "yes" or just smile and look at you in a trusting, confident way. Encourage the child to talk about emotions, not to hide them.
- Set a good example for your child by giving honest, mature expressions of emotions. Don't be afraid for your child to see you cry or hear you say, "It makes me angry when...!" Remember that we live in a world of feelings that pull us in many directions: up when we are happy; down when we are sad; in when we are anxious or concerned about self; and out when we feel warm toward others. The push and pull of feelings may frighten or bewilder the child. As a parent, teach your children to accept and deal with all types of emotions.

Anger

Anger is usually caused by a situation or individual that we perceive as threatening. The threat usually boils down to not getting our own way or injury to our pride.

Psychologists say that there are two first steps in handling anger: (1) acknowledging the anger, and (2) determining the true source of your anger. With parental help, even young children can learn to deal with these first two steps.

At times, angry feelings result in hurtful actions. Children should not be allowed to hurt other children, their parents, property, or themselves. Show children you understand how they feel. Let them know there is nothing wrong with feeling anger, but it cannot be expressed by hurting another person.

Don't shame children for having angry feelings. Shaming will not make the anger disappear. In fact, it may cause children to keep their feelings inside where they will build and explode at a later date.

Younger preschool children (one to three years) usually show anger in physical ways: biting, hitting, kicking, or breaking things. As they grow older, children will use words to tell others they are mad. Encourage your child to say, "It makes me mad when you do that!" or "Stop hitting me! It hurts!"

Sometimes, it's best for a parent to ignore a display of temper since some children learn that anger is an easy and effective way to gain adult attention. Temper tantrums are a case in point. If parents pay attention to temper tantrums, the child may use them again and again to get his/her way.

The parent is a role model, so remember to set a good example. Remember that harsh words, screaming, or hitting hurt others and diminish self. Children learn most of their actions from adults.

As self-concept grows, children feel less anger. It is easier to accept not always getting our own way, and it is harder to hurt our feelings if we feel worthwhile and secure. When a person feels worthwhile and secure, it is easier to accept negative answers without hurt feelings.

Fear

The world can be a frightening place for young children. Things that seem perfectly safe to adults look dangerous and harmful to small children. Their fears seem ridiculous, but they are dreadfully real to a child. Try to see the world through a child's eyes. This will help with understanding why children are afraid now and then.

During the first three years, life brings one new thing after another. Even such ordinary things as a vacuum cleaner and barking dogs can startle a baby. Unfamiliar people and new situations can also be upsetting. A person as familiar as a favorite uncle who has grown a beard can confuse a small child.

Gradually, however, the real world becomes more familiar, predictable, and secure. When young children hear the piercing siren of a fire engine, they know what is making the sound. They can make sense of something new because they have had more experience.

Older preschool children are likely to develop a new set of fears. By age three or so, children are comfortable with what is, but they worry about what could be, and it's difficult for them to separate what is real from what is imagined. Children imagine dangers, such as monsters coming to hurt them at night, and anticipate disasters, such as accidents, wars, or death. For the first time, a child may become afraid of the dark and be troubled by nightmares. All of a sudden, a child may worry that something will happen to his or her body.

Children have different ways of overcoming their fears. Some need to learn all about the situation they fear. Some children need to control the frightening objects themselves. They need to turn the vacuum cleaner on and off. Still other children use their imaginations to fight fear. Imitating a dog by barking can help a child overcome a fear of dogs. And, of course, it always helps to talk about a fear with an understanding parent.

Some parents use fear as a method of control which results in an unnatural dread of persons, things, or occurences: "If you don't take your medicine, the doctor will give you a shot," is a frequent threat, or "If you don't behave, the boogie man will get you."

Because your children have faith in you, you can help them express and overcome their fears. Unfortunately, you also have the power to intensify your children's fears. The way you respond when they are afraid is most important. Some ways are helpful; others do not help at all.

Do Not

- laugh at children's fears.
- force them into situations they fear.
- ignore children's fears.
- transmit your own fears to your children.

Do

- accept their fears as real.
- remain calm.
- remove them from the situation; then talk about it.
- help them understand their fears.
- give them chances to watch other people interact confidently with the things they fear.

Children readily absorb the fears of others. Often they fear mice or thunderstorms only because adults are afraid. Parents who appear anxious about the child's fears tend to intensify rather than diminsh the reaction.

Do not be discouraged if your child develops fears no matter how hard you try to avoid them. You cannot prevent your children's fears but you can help them understand those fears. They need to look at you as an ally and as a role model.

Sadness and Grief

A child who mourns is a tragic figure. Efforts to brighten sad eyes and reduce melancholy indifference often leave adults feeling helpless. What comforts a child who grieves for something or someone who once brought happiness? Can that special teddy bear lost somehow, or the best friend who moved, ever be replaced? How about a pet who no longer snuggles with reassuring warmth in those moments before sleep, or a parent who can never again provide protection, help, and affection because of separation?

Although people and possessions cannot be replaced, children can be prepared for the hurt and disappointment that is a part of every life. Children can learn the skills for managing their feelings.

Give children small doses of loss and separation. Occasional trips by parents can give children experience with separation. A parent who returns from a long business trip, however, might be surprised to find her preschooler sullen and beligerent. Instead of feeling rejected and becoming defensive, the parent should realize that the child's anger comes from fear of rejection and sadness following the

separation. Spending time with the child and patiently accepting the anger should provide the child with sufficient reassurance of love to overcome negative feelings.

If the loss is permanent, talking about happy memories can help children come to terms with their loss. Focus on how the pet or the person once contributed to the child's well being and happiness.

For the lonely child, promote social contact by making arrangements for him or her to play with other children. But remember that children have to set their own pace for making and building friendships. Children must face their peers alone in the social arena and pass their test for social acceptance without adult interference.

Give your children time to experience their own aloneness. Children whose lives are scheduled with constant crowds of other people may find themselves too dependent on the social group. They don't need an auditorium filled with friends. One or two should be sufficient. Children need time to be alone.

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